

The Great American Smokeout: Anti-Smoking Activities 'Permeate' the Curriculum

The Great American Smokeout is a great time to get out the message: Smoking kills!

Included: A "pack" of activities to drive home the anti-smoking message and a "carton" of anti-smoking Internet sites to visit! Every day, several thousand adolescents in the United States light up their first cigarette, according to statistics compiled by the American Cancer Society. That means that more than a million kids will start smoking this year! A third of those new smokers will eventually die of tobacco-related diseases.

The statistics are staggering. They highlight the need for tobacco education at every grade level in every school. "No one's kids are safe from the resurgence in smoking," warns University of Michigan social psychologist Lloyd Johnston. "All parents should be concerned and alerted." There there is no better time than right now -- just in time for the Great American Smokeout -- to begin the teaching!

Below, you'll find a bunch of [cross-curricular activities](#) and links to cool anti-smoking [Internet sites for kids and teachers](#), so you've got no excuse. Include a bit of education about the dangers of smoking in every subject you teach!

ADDITIONAL FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN AND TOBACCO USE

From the American Cancer Society:

- Eighty-nine percent of people who ever try a cigarette try by age 18. Almost no one starts the smoking habit during adulthood.
- Seventy percent of adolescent smokers say they would never have started if they could choose again. That's because the nicotine in cigarettes is addictive. The risk of becoming addicted to nicotine is between one in two and one in three.
- Tobacco is responsible for nearly one in every five deaths in the United States. It is the largest cause of preventable death.
- More than 400,000 people die every year from smoking-related diseases. That's more than from alcohol, crack, heroin, murder, suicide, car accidents, and AIDS combined!

ENOUGH STATISTICS! WHERE ARE THE ACTIVITES?

Math. How much does a pack of cigarettes cost in your state? Let students calculate the cost of a pack-a-day habit!

More math. The typical smoker spends about \$700 a year on cigarettes. "Think of what you could do with all that dough," challenges the Surgeon General in [Up in Smoke!](#), one page on the SGR4Kids (short for the Surgeon General's Report for Kids) Web site. The site lists several things that a kid might do with \$700. She might play 2,800 arcade games! He might take his 40 best friends to the movies and then order 19 pizzas with the works to munch on while they read 162 new comic books! Challenge your students to be creative. Invite them to work individually or in pairs to come up with other things they might do with \$700. Provide store catalogs and other advertisements; let them provide costs of other things they might wish to include.

Hands-on science. (At the lower grades, teachers should perform this demonstration.) Place a large cotton ball inside a plastic juice bottle. Seal the bottle with a chunk of modeling clay. Poke the filter end of a cigarette through the clay so that it's inside the bottle. Light the other end of the cigarette -- the end that's sticking out of the bottle. Slowly pump or squeeze the juice bottle half-a-dozen times to simulate a person puffing on the cigarette. Then remove the cigarette from the

clay. Crush out the lit end. Invite students to take a close look at the cotton ball. Ask your students: What does this demonstration say to you about smoking?

Read a bar graph. (For younger students.) Click here for a [Teaching Master](#) that will provide your students with practice in reading a bar graph. (ANSWER KEY. 1. 17, 2. between the ages of 16-17, 3. 34, 4. 40, 5. between the ages of 18 and 20. **Think About It.** Accept reasoned responses, for example, lots of people start smoking at a young age.)

Geography. Use small sticky notes (for example, Post-Its) for this activity. Provide students with the information on the table below that tells how many cigarettes are consumed per person per year in the twenty countries with the heaviest tobacco consumption. Have each student write a country name and the corresponding number from the table on a sticky note and stick it on that country on a world map. Can students draw any conclusions about tobacco consumption by looking at the map? Create questions for students to answer using the map. For example:

- Which country matches the United States in cigarette consumption? (*Spain*)
- In which country do people consume more cigarettes -- the United States or Canada? (*the United States*)
- In how many countries on the map does the average person consume more than 3,000 cigarettes each year? (*five countries*).

COUNTRY	CIGARETTES PER PERSON	COUNTRY	CIGARETTES PER PERSON
1. Poland	3,620	11. United States	2,670
2. Greece	3,590	12. Spain	2,670
3. Hungary	3,260	13. Canada	2,540
4. Japan	3,240	14. New Zealand	2,510
5. Rep. of Korea	3,010	15. Ireland	2,420
6. Switzerland	2,910	16. Germany	2,360
7. Iceland	2,860	17. Belgium	2,310
8. Netherlands	2,820	18. Israel	2,290
9. Yugoslavia	2,800	19. Cuba	2,280
10. Australia	2,710	20. Bulgaria	2,240

Survey/create a graph. Students can survey ten family members, neighbors, or others over the age of 18. Individuals respond "yes" to the statement below that most closely describes their smoking history:

- I smoke now.
- I used to be a smoker, but I no longer smoke.
- I have never smoked.

Each student creates a bar graph to show his/her individual results for each of the three statements. Then all students' results are tallied to create a class graph. (Older students can figure out percentages and show the class results as a pie chart.)

Art/puzzles. Invite students to draw pictures/advertisements to warn younger students about the dangers of smoking. Cut up the posters to make simple jigsaw puzzles for the younger students.

Read aloud. Read aloud to students from the books *Smoking Stinks!* by Kim Gosselin (JayJo Books, 1997) or *Smoking: A Risky Business* by Laurence Pringle (William Morrow, 1996).

Survey/create a table. Students hand out a survey to at least ten people. (Click [here](#) for a copy of the survey to be printed.) Respondents must put a checkmark in *one* of the three columns (agree, disagree or no opinion/don't know) next to each statement. Students tally their results and create a chart to show those results (similar to the chart shown halfway down the [Facts You Should Know](#) Web page). Then all the students' sheets are gathered and tallied together to come up with the class's results. (Younger students can tally raw numbers; older students can show the final tally as percentages.)

Critical thinking. Collect a series of cigarette magazine advertisements. Space them out on a large sheet of mural paper. Let students write their reactions near each of the advertisements to this question: *How does each ad try to make smoking look like fun or like a good, healthy thing to do?* After students complete the activity, talk about the ideas written on the mural. (Before or after you do this activity, share the five magazine ads and the kids' comments found on the [Be an Ad Buster](#) Web page, which is part of the Surgeon General's SGR4Kids Web site).

Create a line graph. (For upper elementary students and above.) Click here for a [Teaching Master](#) that will provide you students with practice in creating a line graph.

ABC order. More than 500 ingredients are added to tobacco during the cigarette manufacturing process. You'll find a bunch of those chemicals listed below. (These are just a few from the start of the list. Do they sound good for your body?) Adjust the list to your grade level and invite students to place the list of ingredients in ABC order. (The list below appears in alpha order; mix them up for your students.)

acetic acid	acetophenone	aconitic acid
ammonia	ammonium bicarbonate	ammonium sulfide
amyl alcohol	benzaldehyde	benzoic acid
benzoin	benzoin resin	benzyl alcohol
butyl acetate	butyric acid	calcium carbonate
camphene	cananga oil	castoreum
cinnamic acid	citronellyl butyrate	decanal
decanoic acid	diethyl acetate	dimethylbenzyl alcohol
ethyl acetate	ethyl alcohol	ethyl bezoate

Board game. (Click [here](#) for questions to use with this game. Or let students find smoking-related facts on the Internet and make up their own smoking-related statements.) Write each fact on an index card. Some facts are true and some are false. Player 1 rolls a die or spins a spinner. Player 2 takes a card from the stack and reads the statement on that card to Player 1. If Player 1 responds with the correct true/false answer, that player moves ahead on the game board. Then it's Player 2's turn. Player 3 reads the question. And so the game goes until one player reaches "home."

Art/language. Invite students to design their own smoke-free buttons. Wear them on November 20 for the Great American Smokeout.

Discussion Web/Debate. Use the [Discussion Web](#) format to guide students as they respond to this debate question:

Assume smoking is illegal in your state for anyone under age 21. Your state is considering a law that would take away the driver's license from anyone under the age of 21 who is caught smoking or who tests positive for nicotine when a urine test is administered. Is this a fair policy? Yes or no?

(Note: Following the Discussion Web procedure, students think first about the question on their own. Next, they join with a partner to share ideas. Then two pairs of partners join together to decide on one idea that they wish to present to the class for discussion.)

Writing. Your school principal has invited you to sit on a committee that will come up with a no-smoking policy. What should the punishment be for getting caught smoking on school grounds? Explain your reasoning for this punishment.

LET'S SURF THE INTERNET!

Let your students loose on the Internet to explore some of the great sites that teach kids and teens about the dangers of tobacco.

Related Sites

[Great American Smokeout](#)

The official site of the Great American Smokeout.

[Posters With a Message](#)

Click on any of five posters with anti-smoking messages. By clicking you'll view and print out a larger version of the posters.

[The BADvertising Institute](#)

I like this site for middle and high school students. It includes lots of great critical thinking activities, including spoofs on tobacco advertising and ideas for discussion questions and community-based research projects related to smoking. It doesn't shy away from the gross; the site includes graphic photos of oral cancers. Might be just the cure for a teenager who's thinking of taking up tobacco!

[Action on Smoking and Health \(ASH\)](#)

"For everybody concerned about smoking and protecting the rights of nonsmokers," this site has all the latest news related to cigarettes and the tobacco industry. Includes news of ongoing class-action lawsuits and a section with news related to Kids and Smoking.

[Sites for Parents, Educators, and Youth Group Leaders](#)

Links from the CDC to resources for educating kids about the dangers of tobacco and smoking.

[The QuitNet](#)

This free site offers support for smokers who want to quit the nicotine habit. The site also includes news stories related to the tobacco industry, and more.

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